

What is claimed is:

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1. An image processing system comprising a data processing apparatus and a plurality of image processing apparatuses connected through a network,
- wherein the data processing apparatus comprises:
- a first transmitter for transmitting to each image processing apparatus a print job received through the network and a first instruction to calculate a printing cost for the print job;
- a receiver for receiving response data with respect to the transmission by the first transmitter from each image processing apparatus; and
- a selector for selecting one of the image processing apparatuses based on a plurality of response data received by the receiver;
- wherein each image processing apparatus comprises a controller being responsive to reception of the print job and the first instruction from the data processing apparatus for calculating a printing cost based on an image processing capability of the image processing apparatus and for transmitting the calculated print cost to the data processing apparatus.
2. An image processing system according to claim 1, further comprising a second transmitter for transmitting to the image processing apparatus selected by the selector a second instruction to execute printing of the print job that is transmitted by the first transmitter.
3. An image processing system according to claim 1, wherein the selector selects an image processing apparatus with the lowest cost.
4. An image processing system according to claim 1, wherein the print job includes data in portable document format (PDF).

FOOTNOTES

5. An image processing system according to claim 1, wherein the controller uses, as a condition for calculation of the printing cost, at least one of a size of paper, a type of paper, whether or not a two-sided printing is conducted, whether or not a binding process is conducted after printing, whether or not a stapling process is conducted after printing, a method of delivery after printing, and the number of prints, which are obtained from the print job by an analyzer.

6. An image processing system according to claim 1, wherein the controller uses, as a condition for calculation of the printing cost, at least one of the number of pages of images and the consumption amount of consumables.

7. An image processing system according to claim 1, wherein the controller uses, as a condition for calculation of the printing cost, a rate of black and white image and color image of the print job.

8. A data processing apparatus capable of communicating with a plurality of image processing apparatuses connected through a network, comprising:

a first transmitter for transmitting to each image processing apparatus a print job received through the network and a first instruction to calculate a printing cost for the print job;

a receiver for receiving response data with respect to the transmission by the first transmitter from each image processing apparatus; and

a selector for selecting one of the image processing apparatuses based on a plurality of response data received by the receiver.

9. A data processing apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising a second transmitter for transmitting to the image processing apparatus selected by the selector a second instruction to execute printing of the print job that is transmitted by the first transmitter.

10. A data processing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the second transmitter transmits data indicating that the print job transmitted by the first transmitter is invalid to the image processing apparatuses that are not selected by the selector.

11. A data processing apparatus capable of communicating with a plurality of image processing apparatuses connected through a network, comprising:

an analyzer for analyzing a print job received through the network;
a manager for managing cost data indicative of costs required for forming images by the image processing apparatuses; and
a selector for selecting one of the image processing apparatuses based on a result provided by the analyzer and the cost data managed by the manager.

12. A data processing apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising a transmitter for transmitting the print job and an instruction to execute printing of the print job to the image processing apparatus selected by the selector.

13. A data processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the selector selects an image processing apparatus with the lowest cost.

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14. A data processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the print job includes data in portable document format (PDF).

15. A data processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the selector uses, as a condition for selecting an image processing apparatus, at least one of a size of paper, a type of paper, whether or not a two-sided printing is conducted, whether or not a binding process is conducted after printing, whether or not a stapling process is conducted after printing, a method of delivery after printing, and the number of prints, which are obtained from the print job by the analyzer.

16. A data processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the selector uses, as a condition for selecting an image processing apparatus, at least one of the number of pages of images and the consumption amount of consumables, which are obtained from the print job by the analyzer.

17. A data processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the selector uses, as a condition for selecting an image processing apparatus, a rate of black and white image and color image to be formed, which is analyzed by the analyzer.

18. A method for processing data in a data processing apparatus capable of communicating with a plurality of image processing apparatuses connected through a network, the method comprising:

a first transmission step for transmitting to each image processing apparatus a print job received through the network and a first instruction to calculate a printing cost for the print job;

a reception step for receiving response data with respect to the transmission in the first transmission step from each image processing apparatus; and

a selection step for selecting one of the image processing apparatuses based on a plurality of response data received in the reception step.

19. A method according to claim 18, further comprising a second transmission step for transmitting to the image processing apparatus selected by the selection step a second instruction to execute printing of the print job that is transmitted in the first transmission step.

20. A method according to claim 19, further comprising a step for transmitting to the image processing apparatuses that are not selected by the selector data indicating that the print job transmitted in the first transmission step is invalid.

21. A method for processing data in a data processing apparatus capable of communicating with a plurality of image processing apparatuses connected through a network, the method comprising:

an analyzing step for analyzing a print job received through the network;

an obtaining step for obtaining, from a storage section that stores cost data indicative of costs required for forming images by each image processing apparatus, the cost data of each image processing apparatus; and

a selection step for selecting one of the image processing apparatuses based on a result of the analyzing step and the cost data obtained in the obtaining step.

22. A method according to claim 21, further comprising a transmission step for transmitting to the image processing apparatus selected in the selection step the print job and an instruction to execute printing of the print job.
23. A method according to claim 21, wherein the selection step selects an image processing apparatus with the lowest cost.
24. A method according to claim 21, wherein the print job includes data in portable document format (PDF).
25. A method according to claim 21, wherein the selection step uses, as a condition for selecting an image processing apparatus, at least one of the size of paper, the type of paper, whether or not a two-sided printing is conducted, whether or not a binding process is conducted after printing, whether or not a stapling process is conducted after printing, a method of delivery after printing, and the number of prints, which are obtained in the analyzing step.
26. A method according to claim 21, wherein the selection step uses, as a condition for selecting an image processing apparatus, at least one of the number of pages of images and the consumption amount of consumables, which are obtained from the print job in the analyzing step.
27. A method according to claim 21, wherein the selection step uses, as a condition for selecting an image processing apparatus, a rate of black and white image and color image to be formed, which is analyzed in the analyzing step.

28. A computer program executable by a computer of a data processing apparatus capable of communicating with a plurality of image processing apparatuses connected through a network, the computer program comprising:

code embedding a first transmission step for transmitting to each image processing apparatus a print job received through the network and a first instruction to calculate a printing cost for the print job;

code embedding a reception step for receiving response data from each image processing apparatus with respect to the transmission in the first transmission step; and

code embedding a selection step for selecting one of the image processing apparatuses based on a plurality of response data received in the reception step.

29. A computer program according to claim 28, further comprising:

code embedding a second transmission step for transmitting to the image processing apparatus selected by the selection step a second instruction to execute printing of the print job that is transmitted in the first transmission step.

30. A computer readable memory that stores the computer program recited in claim 28.

31. A computer readable memory that stores the computer program recited in claim 29.

32. A computer program executable by a computer of a data processing apparatus capable of communicating with a plurality of image

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processing apparatuses connected through a network, the computer program comprising:

code embedding an analyzing step for analyzing a print job received through the network;

code embedding an obtaining step for obtaining, from a storage section that stores cost data indicative of costs required for forming images by each image processing apparatus, the cost data of each image processing apparatus; and

code embedding a selection step for selecting one of the image processing apparatuses based on a result of the analyzing step and the cost data obtained in the obtaining step.

33. A computer program according to claim 32, further comprising:
code embedding a transmission step for transmitting to the image processing apparatus selected by the selection step the print job and an instruction to execute printing of the print job.

34. A computer readable memory that stores the computer program recited in claim 32.

35. A computer readable memory that stores the computer program recited in claim 33.

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